

UN takes part in women's forum

THE United Nations took part in the first day of a women's forum, co-hosted by the Department of Community Development and the United States Embassy.

In the forum's opening remarks, Walter Mendoca Filho, United Nations Population Fund representative, recognised International Women's Day, celebrated on Saturday.

"International Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world," he said.

"Here in Papua New Guinea, our engagement at this forum will celebrate how far we have come already in the empowerment of Papua New Guinean women and girls. These successes are already benefitting all the women of this country in dozens of different ways. And they will continue to benefit all the women in this nation's future."

"This forum is also an opportunity to identify the challenges we face, and how we can continue to work together to achieve equality for women, and progress for all."

International Women's Day is celebrated throughout the world every year on March 8. Purple ribbons and clothes are worn on this day to demonstrate support for women's rights, gender equality and women's empowerment.

Electoral Commission joins Women's Day celebrations

THE Electoral Commission has joined the International Women's Day celebration by announcing their support for gender equality in the workforce.

Electoral Commissioner Andrew Trawen said the commission has taken drastic steps to address gender equality in particular the work-place by promoting women in key positions.

Mr Trawen said the PNGEC now has two female branch directors out of six within its senior management and three female regional managers out of four in the country.

He said the PNGEC also has three female provincial election managers out of 22 - election manager West New Britain and two acting election managers for Jiwaka and Eastern Highlands respectively.

Mr Trawen said in order to increase female participation at the management level, the commission in 2012 recruited on temporary basis 17 female assistant election managers out of 22 provinces to work besides their election managers in attending to electoral duties.

He said these female officers are now integrated into the Electoral Commission's organisational structure as permanent officers. This is a milestone for the commission. Mr Trawen said the commission has a special role to play in conducting and managing elections in PNG.

"However, PNGEC also has its roles and responsibilities to play as a state agency to encourage women and other marginalised groups to exercise their democratic rights to enroll, vote and stand for elections as candidates and be voted



MOTHERS and children from the Hypababe Women's Co-operative Society group in Hela last Wednesday make the one-finger sign during their annual general meeting in Tari calling on the four Hela MPs to work together for the new province. PICTURE: ANDREW ALPHONSE.

Hela mothers call for MPs to work together

By ANDREW ALPHONSE in Tari.

MOTHERS in Hela Province are calling on their four Hela parliamentarians to put aside their political differences and work together for the development of the new province.

The mothers from the Hypababe Women's Co-operative Society in Hela made the call during their third annual general meeting in Tari last Wednesday.

The group, with over 3840 members, is made up of women from the Kutubu, Paguale, Homa, Pua, Pakale, Yarale, Lau-Timu, Beneria, Honaka-Yabagaru, Yakara-Tigibi, Kikita 1 and 2 and Tebi areas in Komo Margarima and Tari Pori districts.

The mothers are also custodians of the Moran Central (PDL 5), North West Moran (PDL 6), segment 2 Beneria Pipeline, Angore PDL 8 Block 1617 and Block 1788 and the Tari airport project areas in the multi-billion kina PNG

LNG project in Hela.

Through their office bearers Arime Andagali (chairlady), Waiya Tumbi (deputy chairlady), Jennifer Makabe (treasurer), Kapili Minai (secretary) and spokeswoman Theresa Punga, the Hypababe mothers call on their four Hela sons - Governor Anderson Agiru, Tari Pori MP and Finance Minister James Marape, Komo Margarima MP Francis Potape and Koroba Lake Kopiago MP Phillip Udiualu to put aside their political differences and work together to drive the dreams and aspirations of the new province.

The mothers called on the three open MPs to sit with Governor Agiru at a round table and put out their plans and dreams to develop their respective districts and Hela province so that poor destitute mothers and their children would see government services and development reach them at their community and ward levels.

Mrs Punga said the three

Open MPs must also respect the plans Governor Agiru has in developing the province and not in any way seeing encroaching Governor Agiru's work.

The group also called on the so-called Port Moresby based failed politicians and lobby groups to leave the affairs of running the Hela Province in the hands of Governor Agiru instead of taking him to court which only derails the process and makes innocent mass of people back home suffer.

Mrs Punga also used the opportunity to call on Mr Agiru and other Hela MPs to support the Hypababe women with a training center, guest house accommodation and vehicle to assist them in delivering their programs.

Mrs Punga said since the group was established in 2000 and incorporated with Investment Promotions Authority (IPA), they have struggled to come thus far and managed to provide trainings and support for their mem-

bers in village based economic activity like vegetable farming, animal husbandry, and sewing, baking and cooking skills.

She said bulk of the mothers are from far-flung and remote areas of Lake Kutubu, Homa-Pua and Beneria areas where no roads lead to them.

She said the mothers walk for two days and sleep along the way, crossing fast flowing rivers and vast geographical terrains to arrive at Homa Tangi to catch a PMV to Tari to come and sell their market produce or for the meetings and trainings.

Mrs Punga said there is no accommodation in Tari nor a proper market facility for them to sell their market produce and as such, they are calling on their elder Hela son Mr Agiru and other MPs to come to their aid and fund the training center guest house accommodation and a vehicle to transport their garden produce to the markets.

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